

**Classroom Guidance Newsletter**  
**Lesson Nine: Goals and Outcomes of Conflict Resolution**

Dear Parents,

In Lesson Nine, the students learned the goals and outcomes of conflict resolution. The Bible says the Body of Christ contains many parts, all equally necessary and valuable, each performing different tasks. The work cannot be completed without everyone working together. *So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. (Romans 12:5) If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. (Romans 12:18)* Teamwork multiplies our efforts. The Bible shows that when people work together for a common purpose, the result is more than the sum of their individual contributions. *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12)*

The goals and outcomes of conflict resolution were reinforced with activities that focused on competition versus collaboration, win-win/win-lose/lose-win/lose-lose situations, cooperation, choosing whether or not to avoid/accept/try to change a situation, negotiation and compromise, strategies for resolving conflicts, and role play.

Cooperation and Negotiation During the Elementary School Years

Teaching cooperation to children cultivates a valuable skill for them to possess. But it is difficult for many children. Fighting is a child behavior to be expected. People naturally want to look out for themselves and make sure that they are taken care of first. But learning how to cooperate with others requires giving as well as taking and realizing that the good of the group is more important than the good of the one. Learning how to cooperate will help your child succeed in school, in relationships with friends, and in life over all. It is within a family that children can learn important cooperative skills like working together, sharing, and taking turns.

The ability to negotiate is also a valuable and necessary life skill. Negotiation involves empathy and compromise and children who learn to negotiate acquire and learn the importance of these abilities. Parents who teach their children to negotiate with them, as well as with other adults and children, enhance their confidence, self-esteem, empathy and social relationship skills.

Negotiating does not result in defeating another; it's not adversarial. Negotiation teaches and emphasizes fairness and understanding, walking in the other person's shoes, and as favorable outcomes as possible for all parties involved.

Children are given power, independence, and respect when their parents allow and encourage them to negotiate, even as young children. Deciding with a parent which clothes to wear, which breakfast foods to eat, whether to do their homework immediately after school or after dinner, how neat their room should be, how loud to play the TV on Saturday morning when parents are trying to get some extra sleep and what times during the week to do their chores. There are endless opportunities to teach children negotiation. Parents who embrace negotiation and compromise as a family value raise children who know that their opinions, feelings and needs will be honored and respected. Children who are taught in this manner are also much more likely to return this honor and respect to others.

How Parents Can Help Children Cooperate and Resolve Conflict

If we want children to stop fighting, we must teach them new skills for resolving conflict. They need to learn problem-solving skills and develop avenues for generating lots of alternatives for getting what they want in socially acceptable ways. We also want them to become independent and accountable.

It has been found that a child's ability to get what he or she wants in an acceptable manner is directly related to the number of solutions or alternatives the child can think of in a situation. A child who can think of five ways to get what he wants will generally display more socially acceptable behavior than the child who can think of only one or two ways.

Here are some general steps in teaching problem-solving skills to children:

- *Get the facts and the feelings-* When children are upset, fighting, angry, or hurt, first find out the details. When questions like, "What happened?" are asked calmly and non-judgmentally, children usually calm down and answer them.
- *Spend some time focusing on feelings-* Children see things primarily from their own perspective. They may be completely unaware of how their behavior affects other people, except when another person interferes with their needs. To negotiate solutions that are fair to everyone, children need to know how others feel.
- *Help children see the goal-* Generating ideas for solutions is much easier for children when they have a clear goal. Help children define the problem in terms of what both children want to happen. When the problem is phrased this way, children get the idea that the needs of both are important.
- *Generate alternatives-* To help children resolve conflict, adults can help them stay focused on the problem. Adults can also act like a "blackboard." When children suggest alternatives, adults can repeat the ideas then ask them what else could be done. Resist the temptation to suggest ideas as most children might assume their own thoughts are not good enough. If a child needs new ideas, suggest them later or ask the child to imagine how someone else they know might handle the situation.
- *Evaluate consequences-* After the children have generated all the ideas they can, evaluate the consequences. Ask them, "What might happen if you...?" or "How might Matt feel if you...?" Resist the temptation to judge the ideas. Adults will not always be around to tell a child that his/her idea is not good and to suggest another. In the long run, adults will be more helpful by encouraging children to evaluate ideas themselves and see why they are unacceptable.
- *Ask for a decision-* When the children have completed thinking of and evaluating ideas, the remaining task is to make a plan. Restate the problem, summarize the ideas, and let the children decide which they will try. If they choose an alternative you think will not work, be sure they know what they should do next.

The process of teaching problem-solving often seems tedious, and parents may be tempted to just tell a child what to do. But that does not allow children to gain the experience of thinking of what to do for themselves.

#### Goals and Outcomes of Conflict Resolution Resources

[http://biblestudies.suite101.com/article.cfm/sports\\_teach\\_children\\_bible\\_lessons\\_on\\_respect](http://biblestudies.suite101.com/article.cfm/sports_teach_children_bible_lessons_on_respect)

<http://christian-bible.com/Ethics/nonadversarial.htm>

<http://www.lonestarcoaching.com/2010/03/25/how-to-teach-conflict-resolution-to-our-kids/>

<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=287&id=1521>

Sincerely,  
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